

SOME INDIAN PROBLEMS

Being Some Essays Addressed to Patriots
with the "Congress Mentality"

BY

FREDERICK WILLIAM WILSON

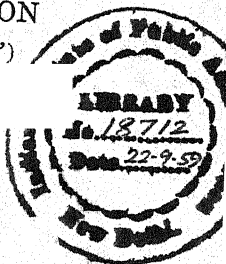
(Formerly Editor of "The Pioneer")

WITH A FOREWORD

BY

PANDIT JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

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To

Sir TEJ BAHADUR SAPRU, LL.D., K.C.S.I.

A Great Patriot
A Great Lawyer
but above all
A Great Friend

No. 4. 2
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FOREWORD

I WELCOME this little book for several reasons. There is no lack of books on India written by Englishmen who have spent long years in this country or have passed through it during a brief winter. There is no lack of good advice in them. Indeed an Englishman's capacity for giving good advice can only be compared with his utter inability to accept it from others. Those of us living in the outer darkness and occasionally troubled with doubts, cannot help admiring the disciplined manner in which the English refuse to see the other side and make themselves impervious to reason. Therein, I suppose, lies their chief strength.

Mr. Wilson is an Englishman with the flair of Oxford about him, and it would be too much to expect him to forget the fact or to rid himself of the leading characteristic of his nation. But, although a newcomer to India, he has taken the trouble to understand her many problems and has written with considerable insight. His criticisms are many and most of us will not agree with all of them. But they are offered

in a spirit which disarms and which provokes one to think.

I welcome the book specially because it represents an outlook and a mentality which differ from mine. It is addressed specially to those who are said to have the "Congress mentality." As Mr. Wilson rightly says the National Congress includes in its fold all manner of people and all kinds of mentalities. And yet perhaps it is correct to refer to them as a whole as possessing a certain political outlook which differs fundamentally from that of the moderates in Indian politics. But this outlook is itself ever changing, and because it is dynamic and changes, it has a far greater chance of adapting itself to the realities than the straight line of moderate thought which left the curve of life long ago and refuses to bend back to it. It may be that even the Congress may become too rigid for a changing India. For India is changing rapidly and, although her political and social super-structure may appear little changed, the cracks on the surface are already apparent.

Mr. Wilson requires no introduction to readers in India. His achievement during two brief years was, in its way, remarkable. India is said to be a land of anomalies, but

surely there can be no greater anomaly in these days of progressive journalism than the Anglo-Indian press of India. Cut off entirely from the life of the people and living in a world of its own, it has specialised in dullness and inanity. There came a change when Mr. Wilson took charge of the editorship of a particularly somnolent and respectable representative of the Anglo-Indian press. For a while it was a live paper, the most readable in India. It amused or pleased or irritated or angered, but it was not dull. And now that Mr. Wilson has left it, it has gone back to its old rut, and lest its hapless readers may be unable to find out what it is or what it stands for, it reminds them daily of "law and order."

I commend this book to Indian readers and specially to those who may suffer like myself from the "Congress mentality." It is always good to understand the view-point of the other side, and Mr. Wilson is an able and friendly representative of this view-point.

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU.

ALLAHABAD :
December 6th, 1929.

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INTRODUCTION

The essays which go to make up this small book do not pretend to be anything like an exhaustive treatment of the various subjects with which they deal, nor do the subjects by any means cover the full range of problems which are presented by an examination of the Indian political situation in the light of its possible future. I have merely attempted to cast a rapidly travelling searchlight on some of the more obvious difficulties, and in all kindness and sympathy to attempt at this critical period in India's history to focus the attention of men of the Congress mentality upon the problems which they will have ultimately to solve. My main motive has been a realisation that in far too many cases the average politically-minded Indian has a tendency to concentrate on ends rather than means, and to slur over, in his whole-hearted adherence to certain solutions, inherent difficulties which will refuse to be resolved by the proclamation of political catchwords, however admirable they may be. If I may further criticise with the fullest desire of being constructive and not obstructive, I must give

it as my opinion that there is a distressing lack of thoroughness in the constructive political programmes of the country, and though I am fully aware of the comprehensiveness and radical nature of the Congress programme, I cannot help feeling that it resembles propositions of Euclid without thorough proof or demonstration. In order that I may myself escape this criticism, I would point to the necessary limitations of space, and to my already stated disclaimer to exhaustive treatment. If this little book and these essays can do something to turn the minds of Congressmen more in the lines of hard constructive and fully prepared political thinking its object will have been abundantly fulfilled. Writing as an Englishman with a far from thorough knowledge of the country, it is possible that at times I may have given offence and trodden indelicately on delicate ground. For these solecisms I trust my fundamental intention will prove sufficient excuse.

F. W. WILSON

Some Indian Problems

CHAPTER I

THE NEED FOR UNITY

THE most facile criticism that is made against the claim for the existence of an Indian nationality is to point to the obvious fact that India is a country made up of many nations, races, and creeds ; of peoples of vastly different stock and descent, talking different languages and in different stages of cultural development. In addition, it is urged that the traditional form of society is, for a large majority of the peoples, based on the caste system which, with its rigorous social boundaries, has produced what may at the mildest be described as the undemocratic problem of the untouchable. It is but natural that Western observers, accustomed to a certain homogeneity in a modern state, should view the problem of forming an Indian nationality or an Indian national spirit as a paradox and a contradiction in terms. The Western political

observer, while prepared to admit differences of language and even of race within the boundaries of his own state, sees as the long result of both exterior and interior forces an amalgam which is more or less coherent, and in which the points of resemblance outweigh the points of difference. Even when within the boundaries of the modern state there exist compact coherent groups speaking a strange language, enjoying alien customs, the force which they exert is merely that of a minority in a state of transition. There are tracts in the United States of America where, if English is almost unknown, chewing gum and the Ford are common factors of civilisation, but hardly anywhere, except in modern Soviet Russia, is there a state functioning with forceful unity made up of heterogeneous and fundamentally diverse elements. Again, in most modern states the influences of toleration or elimination have more or less resolved the religious problem which rises out of the existence of warring creeds. The fierce battles fought in the name of religion which once devastated Europe, turning large areas into smoking wastes, are now conveniently forgotten in an atmosphere which, on the whole, tends to ignore or smooth over the difficulties of religious difference. In India there still exists as one of the major problems facing any unify-

ing effort the antagonism of Hindu and Muslim. It is little wonder then that the first facet of the Indian National Movement that strikes the observer is the disunity, often fierce and embittered, which characterises India's polity.

It is not to be expected that these difficulties and differences will disappear in some magical fashion if and when India attains Dominion Status. The age-long controversies will not be smoothed away by a further extension of the franchise, and by the substitution of able and intelligent Indian administrators for the present heads of the bureaucracy. There are some who think that in a general realisation of the responsibilities attending the actual working out of self-government, religious and racial passions will be quelled, that the lion will lie down with the lamb, and that there will be no dispute as to the religious qualifications for any minor administrative position. Though I am a confirmed and unrelenting optimist about the future of India, I am afraid that I cannot take this view. The working of political influences, encouraged if not actually aided and abetted by responsible people under the present form of Government, has produced a ravine between the two main religious communities, so that something more is needed to bridge it than a

mere reaction. I am, of course, perfectly well aware that there are both Hindus and Muslims whose patriotism and love of their country rises far superior to their religious beliefs, and I would be the last to withhold tribute from men who, in very difficult circumstances, which at times have almost alienated them from their co-religionists, have perpetually and constantly fought the battle of religious tolerance. Something much more is needed either than a pleasing belief in the natural workings of the future or than the efforts of high-minded and far-seeing individuals.

I am told—I do not know with what degree of truth and accuracy—that while there is daily evidence of a stronger and more embittered communal feeling in the country, there is also growing up among the young men an active and almost virulent dislike of the present-day manifestations of religion and of their consequent reaction upon society. I learn that in more than one University the young men have decided that they will be addressed by no Communalist leader, and that in their disgust at so many evidences of communal feeling they are turning away from both Hinduism and Islam. I am iconoclastic enough to welcome this tendency, and to believe that it is a good and healthy sign,

although I should deplore the withdrawal of the restraining and wholesome influences of any creed if there were not substituted for it a definite, governing, vigorous, ethical urge. It is, however, a sign of the times and a warning to all those who would emphasise the old dissensions and would scheme either to secure the supremacy of the Hindu or Muslim Raj.

I have never in my study of this problem in India budged from a very simple fundamental position. Every man has a right to worship the God in whom he believes, in any way he likes, as long as he does not make himself a public nuisance or indulge in practices calculated to annoy his fellow-citizens or to disturb the peace. Religious freedom can only be gained by respecting a similar claim on the part of others, and immediately that claim is recognised and properly entertained freedom becomes circumscribed by restraint. A true idea of citizenship ignores a citizen's religious beliefs and concentrates on his contribution to society, and no state has the right to introduce religious demarcations into its public life. Appointments, positions and patronage generally should be exercised and bestowed on a basis of merit displayed in competition, and the last element that ought to enter into the considerations which

govern this function of the state is the religious one. It cannot, however, be denied that, at the present moment in India, such practical and sensible considerations do not hold the field. It is said that in the first stages of the Morley-Minto Reforms, astute members of the Government, looking round for political support, decided to make a favoured minority of the Moham-medans. The results have been disastrous. The clash of the two religions, instead of being left to the calm and comparatively harmless field of theological disputation, has been manifested in the economic sphere, and I do not think I am stating the problem unfairly when I say that a dominating factor in the Muslim claim for the preferential treatment of their minority is bread and butter. The Muslim, rightly or wrongly, fears that the inauguration of an era in which his co-religionists will not be viewed favourably for posts and appointments, because of their religion, will mean economic distress, and consequently he is apt to indulge in denunciation as to the possible tyranny which may ensue under Dominion Status when the majority of the electorate will be members of a conflicting creed. While not in any way withdrawing from the principles I have advocated above, my advice to the Indian patriot is that he should

fully and sensibly recognise the existence of these facts, and that if he is a Hindu he should be prepared to extend the greatest measure of generosity toward his Muslim brother, to make ample provision for the continuance of the *status quo*, obtaining a clear recognition of the desirability for acting on higher principles as soon as is possible without causing any alarm or economic hardship. Further than this I am not prepared to go. I would not approve for one moment of the principle that a religious minority has the right to interfere with, say, a measure of social reform which is genuinely and sincerely advocated by the majority of sensible men. A Hindu-Muslim truce and perpetual peace is without doubt most desirable and most essential, but surely it is possible to effect it on these lines without compromising or mitigating the essential principles of progressive reform which every self-respecting nation must encourage and inculcate.

Unity in this direction may be achieved by the exercise of mutual good-will, understanding and tolerance. The apostles of the new spirit must be courageous, and be prepared for the most strenuous of combats with the upholders of old theories, but a different collection of qualities is needed to solve the problems

presented by the other forms of disunity and disintegration existing in India to-day. With the growth of education, the development of various natural resources, and the intensifying of local and provincial patriotism, there are certain to exist in various parts of India rivalries and disintegrating factors which will not calmly respond to the cry of Dominion Status. It is interesting to note that many Indians themselves are in favour of endowing provincial Governments under Dominion Status with residual powers. They would prefer a weak and merely supervising central government to a strong central authority, and by increasing the powers of provinces would encourage and perhaps foster the forces which make for disunity, to-day. From this view I entirely differ. I believe most strongly in a powerful dominating central government, possessed of residual powers, because I think it most essential that an all-India spirit should be fostered in order to supply the gap in directing energy which will result from the transference of political powers. It is not to be expected that all India will one day speak one language, or enjoy the same degree of cultural development. It is not to be expected that self-government will eliminate, change or modify the characteristics

of the Punjabi or the Madrassi. There must therefore exist, beyond all local and provincial ambitions, an all-powerful supreme direction drawing its inspiration from the highest common factors of Indian nationality, and in this way only will it be possible federally to weld the organic constituents of the Indian sub-continent into a body politic capable of speaking with one authoritative voice. It is the supreme and manifest duty of every Congressman to study this purely constitutional problem, and to concentrate on the advocacy of a form of government which will develop and not retard the growth of an Indian nationality. First and foremost, however, the main bane of modern Indian civilisation—the Hindu-Muslim cleavage—must be healed.

CHAPTER II

POLITICAL UNITY

AN Indian who was not prepared to admit that the main aim of his political ambition was to see his country enjoying responsible government would indeed be an anomaly. It is strange, however, that while this patriotic and altogether praiseworthy ambition is held by far the greatest majority, the daily actions of the individuals, who go to make up this host, are far too often directed, in effect, to postponing the granting of their keenest desire. There is no use ignoring the fact that, outside Congress, there are hosts of political organisations and parties of greater or less importance, and that even within Congress, there are groups who view one another with a minimum amount of fraternal feeling. The criticisms that have already been aroused by the inclusion among the conditions, asked for in the leaders' Manifesto replying to the Viceroy's Declaration, of a demand for the predominance of men of the Congress mentality in the proposed Round Table Conference, shows that there is more than a tendency in the Congress

Party to believe that other parties can be ignored and that wisdom is only to be justified within Congress' boundaries.

The unfortunate and unhappy history of the various disputes and differences that have occupied so much of the attention and energy of Indian leaders is in itself ample evidence that all is not well with Indian political life. It has perhaps been inevitable, and one should be prepared to extend the greatest amount of sympathy for this phenomenon, that the rapid and almost hectic development of the Indian political self-consciousness should have been accompanied by the emergence of a host of major and minor prophets. It was but natural that, in a country constituted as India is to-day constituted, enjoying or otherwise the benefits of alien rule, educated in Western political thought and yet shackled by the dead hand of the past, the Indian politician should sparkle and disperse the light of truth rather than reflect it in one steady, direct beam. I cannot entirely refrain from criticising the nature of the intensity of the effort that has been made towards securing a political unity for the furtherance of the main patriotic idea. I cannot ignore, as easily as so many Congressmen do, the existence of discontented minorities on the one hand, and the

attempt that is so often made to swamp the main stream of moderate opinion. I resent, as a kind of Liberal myself, the altogether superior attitude which is adopted by so many Congressmen towards the Liberals and other Moderates, and the supercilious self-rectitude which characterises the approach of many Liberals and Moderates to the Congress point of view. It is true, perhaps, that I have not been sufficiently close to, or even interested in the domestic political history of India in the years that followed the Montford Reforms, and that I am forgetting the perhaps justifiable antagonism that resulted between these two main schools of thought as a result of the failure of non-co-operation in 1922. It is a regrettable feature of organised political life in almost any country that political memories are often far too long. Injuries, real or supposed, are remembered when it would be a far better thing for the country if they were buried in oblivion, and a concerted effort made to emphasise the points of contact and the hours of co-operation. As I survey Indian political life to-day, I cannot help being almost disgusted at the number of people who live on past grievances and who refuse to eliminate their irritating effects from a consideration of the dominant features of the present situation. I would

distribute the blame for this widespread characteristic with a free and impartial hand. The general desire of far too many Indian political leaders to-day seems to be a concentration on points of difference rather than an attempt to find the greatest common factor of agreement on which to base a national demand.

Side by side with the growth of political education and the variously expressed desires for India's political freedom, there has been introduced unfortunately a set of considerations which have only resulted in confusing the issue and alarming many good patriots, and of bringing into the limelight problems the solution of which belongs more properly to the future, when self-government has been attained. I am not one of those who believe that immediately following on an act of Imperial Parliament granting Dominion Status to India, the country will flow with milk and honey, economic distress will disappear, and in face of the responsibilities of the new situation that much of the useless and wasteful bickering of to-day will be a thing of the past. I am convinced, and I find that I am in agreement with many shrewd observers of India, who know the country far better than I do, that when Dominion Status is granted there will immediately rise to the

surface an all-important crop of major economic and political questions. Freed from the restrictions and restraints imposed upon them by the practical working of the present regime, different schools of economic thought will proceed to impose upon India's political life lines of demarcation that will inevitably produce problems most difficult of solution. There is certain to be an emergence of political parties which will roughly follow the models that already exist in Western political life. There will be Conservatism, Liberalism and Socialism, with all these three major differences accentuated by the inheritance of difficulties arising from differences of race and creed.

The most distressing feature that I see attending Indian political life to-day is the premature emergence of these differences. It is an emergence which takes various forms, but I do not think my diagnosis is inaccurate when I attribute much of the present confusion and disunity to the inevitable amount of suspicion and antagonism that must follow from the presence of this factor. Congress itself is far from being a united body. It has a right and a left wing and, I am convinced, a Centre Party possessed of moderation, caution and prudence. It is true that on the surface the main points,

which make for difference, are the aims and methods attending India's political demands, but it is surely more than a coincidence that the different points of view about independence and Dominion Status, and the degree of co-operation, and the spirit of co-operation to the Viceroy's demands should be found identified with groups of people who hold opposing views on economic theories. It must be admitted that the unreasoning yet powerful section which advocates independence urges at the same time a socialistic solution for India's economic problems. It is a fact that those who would unflinchingly adhere to the principle of Dominion Status are by birth and tradition and position conservatively minded; and it is to be hoped that between these two points of view, and overlapping to a certain degree, there is a moderate body of opinion that would proceed constitutionally to seek the establishment first of a constitutional government before the battle is joined between the "haves" and the "have-nots." At the present moment a *Real-Politik* towards India's legitimate aspirations is confused by confused thinking. The young men, seeing around them the most grievous economic distress, link up the existence of this condition with the more familiar and more blatant

disadvantages of the present system of government, and are inclined to lay the blame for poverty, bad wages and industrial discontent at the door of the bureaucracy. I am quite willing to admit that on the whole British Government in India has a poor record in the matter of ameliorative legislation in the realm of economic debility, but it is not fair, indeed it is absurd, to blame the British Government for all the faults of present-day Indian Society. Imperialism, and a misguided interpretation of Imperialism, are doubtless linked up with the theory of capitalism, which is daily being more and more abandoned by progressive Western Countries, but capitalism is not a monopoly of British Imperialism and is not necessarily coterminous with that conception. There were Indian capitalists exercising their powers in an ugly fashion and exploiting the rough and ready working of the laws of supply and demand before the British ever came to this country. It is perhaps true that what might be called the 'police theory' of Government adopted by the British Government has allowed capitalism in some of its worst forms to flourish and increase in power, but there are bad Indian capitalists as well as bad British ones, and a wholesale attack on the capitalist

theory of society, while no doubt justified to some degree by the state of affairs as they exist in many parts of the country to-day, is a policy which can only result in the disintegration of Indian political forces and in the withdrawal of valuable allies whose support is essential for the national cause. I do not think that I am misreading the signs of the times when I see in the independent attitude adopted by some of the Bombay Liberals a protest against the flirtations that have been carried on by some Congressmen who have given adherence to political views that are at times indistinguishable from Socialism or even Communism. It is no doubt difficult for the young man of to-day, acutely conscious of the economic ills of his country and seeing all round him ample evidence for the existence of economic oppression, to lump all his remedies together and to mix up his demand for national freedom with political economic remedies of a much more dubious validity. The result has been that the more vocal and dynamic elements in politics during the last two or three years have drawn their main inspiration from the Youth Movement with results which have not been beneficial for India's main object. It seems to me to be most short-sighted and suicidal so to confuse the issue at the

present moment that valuable allies are forced to reconsider their position and to pursue independent avenues to the national goal.

What then is the plain duty of every Congressman, and of every member of the political groups who stand outside Congress? Surely it is to secure the greatest possible amount of agreement and by mutual forbearance to align the greatest number dedicated to attaining the main national ambition. It is the duty of Congress to place in the background its disputed economic propositions and to render co-operation as easy as possible. It is the duty of every member of other political organisations to make every allowance for the impatience and almost fanatical sincerity of the possessors of the Congress mentality, and to accompany Congress as far as possible and as willingly as they can. Nothing is more calculated to harm the cause of India in reactionary circles than the present disunion, and the introduction of extraneous and opposition-provoking propositions. The strength of the present system of Government lies in the disunity of the opposition that is offered to it. "Divide and rule" has been the conscious maxim of all those who would keep India from enjoying her proper place in the British Commonwealth of Nations. Nothing

could be more welcome to the believers in the old Imperialism than the existence of fratricidal warfare among Indian patriots. There will be plenty of time in the future to discuss Socialism and to mitigate unreasoning Capitalism, but it is impossible to over-emphasise the fact that the more it is discussed to-day and made a live issue in the Congress Party, the more difficult it will become to secure a strong united voice to speak with clarity and authority to His Majesty's Government. When there is so much to be gained by unity, when the advantages accruing from co-operation and mutual toleration are so immense, it seems to me a positively wicked act to excommunicate those who differ on minor points, and to make it almost impossible for various schools of political thought to enter into communion, and to secure an untrammelled and unfettered battle-ground for the discussion of inevitable problems. I would appeal most strongly to members of the National Congress to concentrate on one thing and on one thing only; to secure Dominion Status and to restrain in the interests of their undoubted patriotism from confusing the issue and from the unprofitable sport of heretic hunting.

CHAPTER III

THE REFORM OF SOCIETY

IT must be admitted in all fairness that it is only an infinitesimal percentage of the population of India who are politically educated, and it must also be admitted that there is not a great amount of validity to be attached to the argument which would seek to discredit the influence of the politically-educated and to attempt to explain the activities of the minority as an exploitation of the illiterate and the indifferent. It appears to me that a much safer generalisation is to identify the general desires and wishes of the educated with the uneducated on the whole, and so to find between the two a greater measure of agreement perhaps than would exist if there was a greater diffusion of education and the majority were thinking and arguing for themselves. In other words, an Indian leader is no less a truly representative leader because his following do not possess political or other education. The argument on the other side is often used by opponents of India's progress. It is a commonplace to

attempt to represent the vast majority of Indians as being happy, contented, loyal, adherents of the British Rule, disturbed and stirred up by evil-minded agitators. Personally, I think this explanation the sheerest nonsense. The hard facts and realities of life bear on illiterate and literate alike. It does not require a vast amount of education to understand the pangs of hunger, and although a man may not be able to argue and ascertain the economic reasons for an unsatisfactory economic situation, it is not difficult for him to understand from his own experience more obvious results. I have often heard it urged against the activities of Indian politicians that, instead of attempting to lead their followers into a true appreciation of the real political and economic problems of their country, they lump all grievances and complaints together and use the result as an argument against British rule. I am afraid this tendency does exist, but at the same time it is extremely difficult to find in the history of British rule many evidences of a sincere and consistent attempt to lift the general tone of a society and to improve the condition of the average man. When all that can be legitimately said has been said about the benefits which have accrued to the country from the British occupation, it

is difficult to refute the suggestion that the benefits have been negative rather than positive. The governing idea of the administration has been the perpetuation of law and order—two blessed words which conceal a multitude of sins both of commission and omission. The system has been efficient with the object of securing a peaceful and well-policed state, yet it is a strange commentary upon this efficiency that year after year the reports of the heads of Provincial Police Services pride themselves upon their handling of a yearly larger number of crimes without ever venturing upon an explanation as to why violent crimes are, upon the increase. It never seems to have struck these gentlemen that there must be something organically wrong with the composition, organisation and structure of a society in which there is this deplorable increase. When it is remembered that a tremendously large proportion of such crime is armed dacoity, it is impossible to resist the conclusion that the countryside is getting hungrier and hungrier, and that something is grievously wrong. At the same time it is impossible to acquit the average Indian politician of all responsibility for the often unreasoning state of mind of many of his countrymen and for the uncomfort-

able economic state in which they find themselves. The Indian politician is usually not a particularly wealthy man and has to devote a large portion of his time to earning his living. His political education is rarely thorough and drawn, as he often is, from the lawyer class he far too often manages to conceal the gaps in his knowledge by his fluency and mental agility. I have been told by quite a number of high placed civilians inspired with a genuine desire to cooperate with Indians, that the great fault they have found in most of the criticisms and suggestions that are brought forward from the Indian side, is a high degree of impracticability and a superficial knowledge of the subject under discussion. It is impossible to read the debates either of the Assembly or of the Provincial Councils without finding that with the exception of some outstanding figures in public life and some individual experts, the general level of necessary and useful information is apt to be disappointing. There are many excellent generalities. There is a superfluity of generalisation often apt and true, but when these have been brushed aside and the basic nature of any particular problem comes up for examination, there is a marked absence not only of knowledge but also of interest.

I have emphasised at some length this criticism because while it in a way refutes the argument that Indian politicians are merely and in great part unscrupulous agitators stirring up a Utopian country side, it yet opens the door to an avenue of thought which it is the duty of every politician and every Congressman thoroughly to explore. I do not believe myself that the present existing faults of Indian society, that its weaknesses, backwardness and anomalies are viewed with indifference by most of the politically educated. I am not certain that when their attention is drawn to social evils or to the paradoxes of society their instincts are not correctly awakened and their hearts do not properly respond. I am sure that practically one and all are alive to the urgency of many of these problems of society, but that their energies are submerged in the general nature of the cause in which they have enlisted. This is perhaps a true and legitimate explanation, but I cannot help thinking that it is not a complete excuse, and that it is the plain and obvious duty of every politician to make time for the study and advancement of social reform. Here I am afraid I am tempted to accuse many Indian politicians of a lack of political courage. I followed with the greatest interest the progress of

the Sarda Marriage Bill, enlisting myself as one of its most ardent supporters. In my perhaps ignorant Western eyes, I found it honestly impossible to understand the point of view of any section of the opposition. Again and again I read speeches from the lips of respected Indian leaders who, while denouncing the evils of child-marriage, yet plead for postponement of the measure and for a putting off of the day of legislation. I noticed an extraordinary timidity displayed in dealing with the feelings of the orthodox, although practically everybody was agreed that the orthodox position had not sufficient grounding in reason to warrant any interference with the Bill. At the same time I noticed that if any man did have the courage to enunciate the doctrine that the injunctions of thousands of years ago should not be held valid to-day unless supported by plain common-sense, he was made the object of a fierce attack and was practically told that he was unfitted for public life. I searched the opposition speeches in vain in an effort to find one good and sensible reason against the Bill, and the strongest argument I came across was a plea not to disturb the *status quo*.

Now the Sarda Marriage Bill episode—in my opinion a most excellent piece of legislation—is

but a minor part of the work that has to be done in reforming, refashioning, and if the expression can be used, modernising Indian society. No patriot can be contented with this society to-day. It is impossible any longer to defend the caste system. I notice that practically every modern Indian writer on economics denounces this feature of Indian civilisation. The caste system in its present development, write Professors Jathar and Beri. "deserves only unqualified denunciation. It is one of the greatest drags on progress in every direction which the perverted ingenuity of man has devised for his own undoing. Whatever its initial merits it has at present degenerated into a vast engine of oppression and intolerance, and a malignant force making for social and political disunity and weakness.....The caste system has prevented in India the evolution of a strong nationality which has been promoted elsewhere by a process of unrestricted crossing between the different races inhabiting a common territory.....We range ourselves with those who believe that it is impossible for the Indian people to realise their economic destiny to the full without political emancipation, and the caste system undoubtedly acts as a great obstacle to the attainment of political Swaraj." I

firmly believe that these sentiments will be shared by the greater majority of those who will read these words, and I have not the slightest doubt that in the minds of countless thoughtful and patriotic Indians these ideas have existed for many years. But I cannot refrain from pointing out that it is only comparatively recently that anything has been actively done to remedy the situation, and there can be no doubt that Miss Mayo's offensive volume did more to stir up the Indian conscience on the subject than centuries of experience of the system itself. All honour to Mr. Gandhi and other Indian leaders who have attacked this system of caste, but surely there is a very grave criticism to be made against the Indian leaders that their concern for the scandal of untouchability is of such recent growth.

The reform of Indian society cannot be allowed to wait for the grant of Dominion Status. It is a work which must be put in hand immediately without any loss of time, and it is a task which must be preached daily and hourly in every village throughout the land. I often sit and hear intelligent and thoughtful young men denouncing the British Government and all its ways, and holding forth at great length as to the benefits which will be immediately forthcoming when they are at the helm.

I have often interrupted them, and asked point blank what were they doing day by day to help to reconstruct the society for the future of which they are so concerned. It is a lamentable thing, but nevertheless true, that there is far too widespread a tendency to allow matters in this respect to drift. There is no conscious dynamic effort to propaganda and to alter the inherited conceptions of the multitude. The general idea seems to be that with the growth of education the caste system will be destroyed, and that the money will only be available for a proper and adequate system of education when India has Swaraj. I have said before that I do not believe in these lightning changes that will attend the attainment of Dominion Status, and I do not see very much to justify a belief that the first All-India Cabinet will start an intensive campaign against caste. The way of politicians all over the world is usually to avoid trouble and not to walk into it, and I cannot see a successful issue attending such a campaign unless there is a real deep stirring of the public conscience and an irresistible expression of public opinion on the subject.

It is an impossible task to enumerate serially the many points in Indian society as it is organised at present which require a surgical

operation. The condition of the cities is a tribute neither to the intelligence of the inhabitants nor to their civic sense. There are countless matters of health, sanitation, overcrowding and unintelligent domestic economy which will require years of intensive propaganda before there is an audible cry for a change from the people concerned. These are matters more primarily concerned with the tone and spirit of local self-government, which, however, must be recognised as the only sound basis of a healthy and vigorous central Legislature. I am told that the many criticisms that are made against the various forms of self-government that do exist in localities are occasioned by the measure of dual control that exists, and by the fact that as long as the present system does exist, local patriotism will not venture into the open and give a lead in civic sense. I find it hard to accept this explanation, although I am quite well aware of the fact that many Indian citizens find no urge or impetus at the present time to tempt them to offer themselves for civic duties. The result is that in far too many cases municipalities and other local authorities are filled with the incompetent, the dishonest, the corrupt, and the sycophantic, but the voluntary self-denial of the true patriot and his concen-

tration on other perhaps more interesting political themes will have a probable reaction of the most disastrous nature upon the first years of Swaraj. Nations reap what they sow, and the weeding of a nation's undesirable features is a slow and difficult process. Congressmen, at the present moment, perhaps in the most vocal and spectacular organisation in the country, have a very special duty cast upon them. They must make themselves responsible for the widest possible dissemination of an intention, at the very least, to grapple with these problems and to change root and branch. I would not have them slacken for one moment in the pursuit of their political ideals. I would not have them withdraw the slightest portion of their present concentration on the attainment of Dominion Status. I would like to see them, however, tinge the whole of their case with a propaganda for social reform and with a realisation that the society in which they live requires drastic alteration. I read this recognition in but few speeches. I come across the admission that such a policy is necessary but rarely, and to my mind this is all wrong. I have found the Indian politician so absorbed in attack that he has forgotten the necessity for elementary defence. I have noticed also a sensitiveness

on these points and a reluctance to discuss them. This is not the way to face an admitted evil, and I would appeal to Congressmen to take their courage in both hands and to start immediately on the social reforms of the society they wish to control politically.

CHAPTER IV

INDIAN INDIA

THERE ought to be no minimisation of the complexity and the difficulty of the problem of bringing the Indian states into peaceful, friendly and profitable relationship with British India enjoying responsible self-government. It is a problem which will not only cause great anxiety to the constitutional lawyer, but will call for the very best efforts of the patriotic statesman. Unless some measure by which cooperation can be secured is devised, a great part of the validity which ought to attach dignity, importance and coherence to the establishment of a Dominion in India will be hopelessly lacking. It is impossible to have in the future two separate and distinct Indias, for apart from geographical and economic reasons there would be bound to be an ensuing strife which would ultimately prove disastrous to both. It is not my purpose, however, to enter into an exhaustive discussion of the various solutions that have been proposed and of the various schemes that have been put forward. I would merely emphasise in this respect that some solution, honourable

and agreeable to both parties, must be arrived at before representatives of British and Indian India go into conference with His Majesty's Government. It is unthinkable that any coherent and practical scheme of Dominion Status could ignore or lightly deal with the problem of Indian India. And if, as I firmly believe, there does exist on both sides a real desire to come to an agreement on this question and to face the British Government as allies bound together for offensive and defensive purposes, it would be criminal for either party not immediately to inaugurate machinery for attaining such a solution. Everything can be lost by disunity ; and everything can be gained by unity. Unfortunately there undoubtedly exists among a certain section of members of the National Congress a bitterness and antagonism, not only directed against some individual rulers of Native States, but also against the system under which these Native States exist. At the very least there is a failure to understand the political advantages of silence and restraint in view of the existence of grievances, real or imaginary, and inspired in many cases by a patriotism that would work for universal reform and the introduction of democratic methods, regardless of the tender corns that would be

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trod upon in the pursuance of these aims. I wish, therefore, in this short essay to advance some reasons for preaching the virtues of moderation and forbearance in the attitude in which so many of my Indian friends approach the problem of the future of the Native States.

In the first place let us consider the political situation of the Native States themselves. Apart from their domestic state, and some are frankly good and some are frankly bad, they do not manifest to the world a united front, as, even in the presentation of their all-important views on the questions discussed by the Butler Committee, some of the most important States withheld co-operation. Then again their status is far from uniform. On the whole it can be fairly said that they fall into three grades. There are semi-sovereign states which have surrendered only certain definite powers to the paramount power, and specifically by practice and treaty retained the rest. There are states which have surrendered most of such powers and by treaty and practice admitted a paramount power's right to interfere in their internal affairs in certain contingencies the nature of which are solely defined by the paramount power. There are also states which camouflage a complete dependency on the paramount power

under an apparent but unreal manifestation of the trappings of sovereignty. The ruler, the Native Prince, has a title and is flattered ; his State is for all intents and purposes a complete British possession. An attempt on the part of learned counsel arguing the case of relationship with the Crown on behalf of many of the Princes has only succeeded in producing the plain, blunt, awkward, and not-to-be-contested proposition that paramountcy is paramountcy, and that in the words of Lord Reading, the supremacy of the Crown in India is not based only upon treaties and engagements, but exists independently of them. The doctrine laid down in that famous letter to the Nizam has been reiterated, so consequently it is impossible to avoid recalling the following sentence :—" The consequences that follow are so well-known and so clearly apply no less to your Exalted Highness than to other rulers that it seems hardly necessary to point them out." In other words the British Government claims the sole and arbitrary power of interpreting any treaties or engagements that exist between itself and the Native States. If there is any dispute, if a clause in a treaty is interpreted in such a manner as to give offence and cause resentment, the file in question is merely passed on to another department of the

Government of India, the head of which gives a decision endorsing previous action. It is not to be wondered at that the Indian Princes are profoundly dissatisfied with the present position, and there is ample evidence to show that they are neither content or willing to take this decision lying down. With their immense wealth, with their individual talents and with their capacity for attracting to themselves the advice and service of eminent jurists and publicists, they have apparently decided not only to appeal to public opinion over the heads of the Butler Committee and the Government of India, but also to seek alliance with the constitutional and moderate elements in British India in the hope that, to put it bluntly, they will be able to strike a better bargain with their fellow-countrymen than with the representatives of the paramount power. Apart from individual instances of misrule and mis-government, and apart from the merits or demerits of particular cases of arbitrary interference and arbitrary ruling, there can be little doubt that the main body of rulings to which the Indian Princes have had to submit constitutes a not very creditable chapter in the history of the British occupation of India. The mailed hand has peeped through the velvet

glove, and treaties, engagements, and Sanads have been swept away according to the whim of officialdom. I am not attempting, for one moment, to deny the existence of the proposition that many of these acts of interference and of arbitrary control have been justified by misgovernment, mismanagement, and the worst features that attend the degeneration of benevolent despotism. "Where Imperial interests are concerned or the general welfare of the people of a State is seriously and grievously affected by the action of government, it is with the paramount power that the ultimate necessity of taking remedial action if necessary must lie." So ran another sentence in Lord Reading's already quoted letter, and no one will deny that there have been many instances in which this power so enunciated has been legitimately used. But this fact does not get away from the general feeling of resentment and uncertainty which is the main characteristic at the present moment of the Indian Princes. Now Indian Princes are subject from a political point of view to another differentiation. There is the enlightened Prince, the indifferent one, and the unlightened member of that order. I would prefer not to discuss the political position of the third class except to point out that nowadays

almost his strongest critic is his fellow-Prince. The indifferent member of the order views with mixed feelings of apprehension and alarm the growth of public opinion and democratic institutions, not only in British India but in Indian India. His attitude is essentially epicurean, and he shelters himself behind the comforting reflection that if any change has to be, it will not come in his day, and that sufficient unto the day are the constitutional changes thereof. The enlightened Prince may be again divided into two categories. He has, firstly, adopted a somewhat insular attitude, and, devoting himself to the development and administration of his own territories, has turned a convenient blind eye to the activities and fears of his brethren and to the democratic yearnings of so many of his countrymen. The second category of the enlightened is a keen and active force not only within the boundaries of his own State, but throughout British India. Frankly recognising the inevitability of constitutional rule, knowing that it is impossible to erect a nine-foot wall round his State and so prevent the influx of democratic ideas, he recognises that his future and the future of his House is a choice between unwilling and humiliating acceptance of the continued enforcement

of the doctrine that paramountcy is paramountcy and a position among the leaders of a united Federal India within the British Commonwealth of Nations. He is ambitious, and rightly ambitious, to take a proper place among Indian statesmen, and he visualises untold advantages accruing not only to his Order and to his subjects, but also to his countrymen from a definite progressive alliance between the two Indias. Although the members of this category are few, they possess the great strength which is derived from courage, initiative, and identification with rational evolution. They may not be in the position of dictating to the other members of their order; they may not have entirely emancipated themselves from some of the unwelcome traditions of their class, but with them the future undoubtedly lies and to their point of view the rest of their order will be inevitably driven by the hard realities of political progress and by the march of events. They also present a nucleus among a body of men, who are not particularly distinguished for their democratic sympathies, for negotiation with a view to solving some of the implications attending the grant of Dominion Status, but it must be remembered that they are nervous, suspicious, and apprehensive of the new orientation

to which their reason inclines them and that they must be handled with the greatest tact and circumspection if they are to be led successfully through the ceremony of the solemnisation of the marriage between the two Indias. Personally, I am certain that the dominant argument in their minds is that almost anything is better than the present enjoyment of sham power, and that they are certain that they will be able to strike a better bargain with the representatives of British India than with Sir Harcourt Butler and the officials of the Political Department.

It is no doubt extremely hard for the believers in the advantages and benefits of democratic rule to contemplate with equanimity adherence and support to a policy which proposes to stay the hand of democratic propaganda, and to march hand in hand with the upholders of despotic government often manifested in culpable forms. It is perhaps almost impossible for many of the adherents of the Congress Party to visualise a future constitution for India in which, at the beginning, the Indian States will preserve their autonomy and will only be indirectly subject to efforts to secure homogeneity, but such enthusiastic thinkers must learn to face plain ordinary facts. The political advantages of securing an alliance and

understanding with the Indian Princes far outweigh the disadvantages. A united India arguing for an agreed Bill with the representatives of His Majesty's Government will be in a far more powerful position than an India with two wings and two opposing camps. The status of the Delegation to a Round Table Conference will be immeasurably better if within its ranks it numbers some Indian Princes. Again there should not be an undue fear of the presence of heterogeneous elements in the new Indian Federation. History provides many examples of where little harm has resulted from the presence in such a constitution of differing elements. The German Empire, as founded in 1871, provided a welter of heterogeneous elements. The repository of Imperial sovereignty in that empire was the body of German Sovereigns together with the Senates of the three free cities considered as a unit, and it was laid down that privileges expressly guaranteed to the sovereign and constituent states could not be withdrawn without their consent. As Dr. Beni Prasad points out in his brilliant little book, "The Problem of the Indian Constitution,"—"once within the Federation a state will unconsciously, if not consciously, approach the general standard of rights, duties

and institutions. The instruments of science, the economic forces and the irresistible march of ideas may be relied on in India as everywhere else to diminish the heterogeneity and involve homogeneity. Nothing can prevent the State Government, from changing along modern lines—the process has already commenced—and once their internal political institutions are remodelled, they will feel an irresistible attraction towards the Federation.”

I would ask members of the Congress Party carefully to consider this suggestion and opinion. I cannot overemphasise the value and the necessity for securing the goodwill and the co-operation of the Indian native States in the forthcoming constitutional struggles. If this goodwill and co-operation, however, is to be secured, it is incumbent upon British India's politicians to respond with an equal valuable and practical gesture. I do not suggest that they should abandon their principles or allow expediency to interfere with the legitimate propagandising of their democratic ideas, but I do urge that in order to secure the alliance I have outlined they should cultivate a notable amount of restraint and should avoid giving offence to native Princes by tactless attacks upon their administration and their system of government.

In a country where there is so much to be done, where the foundations of democracy are so recently and in so many cases insecurely laid, it is all-important that the leaders of public opinion should avoid incurring needless strife and unnecessary opposition. There is much in Indian India of which the British Indian can be legitimately and honestly proud. There is admittedly much to criticise and much to reform, but similar generalisations apply in British India. I would therefore plead with the Congress Party to do their best to exercise patience and tolerance and to go as far as is humanly possible to secure the help, support and friendship of an influential and powerful section of their countrymen.

CHAPTER V

THE CIVIC SENSE

EVER since men began to concern themselves with theories of politics, they have studied with varying degrees of absorption the problem of civics. In the earliest days of political science, when the busy, crowded life of the city state was the dominant feature of so much ancient civilisation, it was but natural that political science became little more than applied civics, and again and again throughout history the small complex unit of a city has given an unmistakable trend to current political thought. With the amalgamation of city states, with the growth of wider and all-embracing economic theories, and with the rise of nations representing the overwhelming attraction of unifying forces there has been a danger in more modern times of forgetting civics in their true sense, or in interpreting them in a narrow and unprofitable manner. During the struggles for democratic advancement, for the extension of the electorate, and popular control among the Western nations, local patriotism became submerged, and the

needs of the state, the great Leviathan, swamped the needs of the more fundamental and natural unity. Many modern states are the result of a growth which has not always been natural, and whose adventitious features have tended, to the exclusion of more domestic issues, to attract attention and to demand the best energies of its citizens.

The present system of government in India is an example of a strong, driving, unifying force which has proceeded on a programme of development both in its political reforms and in its economic activities at the expense of the smaller units within it. The Provinces have always been, in the eyes of the Central Government, administrative conveniences rather than living organisms. Up to the Montford Reforms the position of the Province was one of complete dependence on and subjection to the Central Government, a tendency which dates to the earlier days of British rule. Local self-government was in the hands mainly of the district officer, and the Government official, with the result that uniformity was gained at the expense of any expression of individuality. This may be a general and fairly valid reason for the unsatisfactory state of local self-government throughout India today.

but like most good reasons it fails to be an adequate excuse. It is impossible today to survey the condition and state of elected municipalities, corporations and District Boards in India and be satisfied with the result. There is no getting away from the fact that many ugly and unpleasant features flourish, and that the sense of civics among the people at large and among the limited electorate in particular is in a very parlous condition. Somehow or other public life as represented by these bodies has failed to attract the energies of a praiseworthy collection of men. There are, of course, exceptions, but on the whole they only go to prove the rule that municipal life as far as it has manifested itself at present in India is not something over which the Indian patriot can lavish legitimate pride. I have discussed this question with many of my Indian friends who have been compelled reluctantly to agree to the truth of this generalisation and to admit that the same high degree of patriotism, which has been undoubtedly manifested by India's national leaders, has not been reproduced in the more restricted sphere.

I am quite willing to admit that the all-absorbing interest of the national cause and the intensive desire of securing a fundamental

change in the Central Government has acted as a light does to moths. The best brains, and even the majority of the second class brains, have been irresistibly drawn into national politics and have not found the same satisfactory amount of self-expression in municipal life. The standard of debate, the standard of criticism and the standard of knowledge and interest in the present legislature can compare favourably with those of any other elected assembly in the world, but it is impossible in all fairness to institute the same comparison between the councils and similar bodies elsewhere and the subordinate local authorities. There is an absence of knowledge; there is an absence of application, there is an absence of thoroughness, which has tended to make the more permanent side of the present dyarchical arrangement far too predominant. Again and again I have noticed how members of Councils have seized on some excellent points for criticism, for reform, and have been compelled to abandon their case, almost as soon as they had stated it, because they did not possess the requisite knowledge and had not taken the trouble to apply themselves properly to the point in hand. It is remarkable, for instance, when Provincial public life has produced a man of ability, knowledge, acumen, and application,

what degree of predominance he can exert. The position that Mr. Chintamani occupies in the United Provinces' Council is an object lesson to every Indian. Mr. Chintamani is, without fear of any rival, the dominating figure of that assembly—a position he has only attained by constant hard work and study, but there are, alas, few Chintamanis, with the result that Provincial public life is far too often the venue of the self-seeker, the sycophant, and the interested.

It may be that the dearth of talent to be found in the Provincial Councils is to be partly accounted for by the elementary fact that there are, as yet, not quite enough brains to go round. and that the elected portion of the Central legislature is in the nature of a shock force. I am loth to accept this explanation, and I would prefer to offer an alternative one. From my own personal observation and knowledge, I am convinced that it would be an easy matter to return to the Provincial Councils an adequate number of reputable, able men who would improve the standard and add to the vitality of the proceedings. Unfortunately it must be recognised that many of these eligible individuals do not desire under the present system to take part in public life and to display their talents and manifest their ability in endless

and often degrading quarrels with the all too frequent quaint specimens from among their countrymen who occupy ministerial positions. These men have adopted an attitude of *laissez-faire*. In effect, they say, "Nothing can be worse than the average Provincial Council ; nothing we can do as long as Government possesses its present and extraordinary powers will alter in any material degree the effects of dyarchy," and so provincial public life presents at the best a humdrum, piebald, appearance, relieved occasionally by an unending series of useless, if bitter, skirmishes. Unfortunately too, the policy adopted by most of the Provincial Governments in the appointment of Ministers is such as not entirely to glorify Provincial life. The selected ones either prove themselves more reactionary than the worst bureaucrat or else fritter away their energies in Tammany Hall methods or in rampant Communalism. I know cases where there is much more concern among the Ministers over the dismissal of a corrupt chaprasi who happens either himself or through his relations to have political influence, than over the introduction of a major political measure. It is impossible to believe that the Governors of the various Provinces can entertain any other feeling but that of contempt for

the Ministers so often cast up by the present system. They must know full well the reaction and the consequent degradation of public life in their councils, and it is impossible entirely to acquit them for the low standards disfiguring the Provinces. There have been good Ministers, and all too often they found that it was made impossible for them to continue; and there may be in the future good Ministers, and on this question I would suggest that one of the easiest ways in which Government could manifest its change of heart towards the Indian problem would be to sack the present lot, and to give respected and able men of affairs a chance to co-operate and smooth the way for the fuller measure of self-government that must be granted. With the Provincial Council in this sad and deplorable state, it is not surprising that the standard of subordinate forms of local government is such as to call for violent criticism from all quarters. Even allowing for the usual supercilious and superior attitude of civil servants and others who report on their doings, it is beyond the capacity of any honest man to find satisfaction in the present state of these bodies. Inefficiency in almost every department of public administration is the chief characteristic where corruption and

Communalism are absent. There have been cases where public-spirited men have entered local self-government and have attempted to raise the standard and to produce something of which the locality might be proud. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru made a strenuous effort in Allahabad but gave it up in disgust, and one has only to have personal knowledge of the general supineness of an average Municipal Board to deduce that nothing short of a complete revolution in the civic sense of the population is going to effect any radical change. You have only to walk or drive down the main roads and through the bazaars of any town in India to see that there is almost a complete absence of the civic spirit, and a complete indifference to the ordinary amenities of life as expressed in cleanliness and sanitation. This spirit is manifested in the general state of town-planning, education, and public health ; what money there is is often wasted, and there is a striking reluctance to understand and appreciate the simple proposition that if a townspeople want a better and cleaner town they must be prepared to make adequate financial sacrifice. It is no answer to lay all the blame upon the Government. It is not sufficient to point to the past mistakes which Government has made

and to its far too common reluctance to sanction schemes and to grant financial aid for such development. No Government in the world can ultimately resist the clearly expressed and definite voice of public opinion. Unfortunately, public opinion is in too many cases conspicuous by its absence, and dirt continues, and insanitary conditions prevail, and there is a general indifference to progress and improvement.

The creation of a civic sense is therefore one of the first duties of the Indian patriot. He must not be content with building a beautiful roof to the place of his dreams without laying good and adequate foundations. It cannot be expected that public life in its national expression will flourish until locally it is healthy and vigorous. Good brains are needed to deal with the problem of a town's sewage just as much as they are required for dealing with a nation's defence. I am not inclined to believe that all this will be altered along with the other many miraculous changes with the granting of Dominion Status. There can be no successful Dominion Status all over the country unless there is a fanatical eagerness to reform and to improve root and branch. The common people must be stirred up to demand improvements; they must

be educated as to the lines these improvements must take and they must be provided with local leaders of knowledge and ability whom they respect, to conduct their advancement. A vast educational work must be taken in hand at once with the object of training and rousing public opinion and seeing that it is vocal for reform. I would allow none of the restraints that too often attach themselves to the presence in Indian society of the dead hand of the religious past. A decrease in child mortality, a wholesale reform of maternity methods with its consequent saving of life, and a complete disappearance of the present insanitary conditions in which food stuffs are sold, are some of the immediate objects on which custom and tradition must be challenged. A healthy nation is a self-respecting nation and capable of undertaking its full responsibilities, but it is impossible for the honest Indian patriot at the present moment to place his country anywhere near this category. I would have the Congress Party devote itself, or rather a large part of its energy and time to the creation and formation of a development department which will energetically propagand for these reforms. I would like to see an awakening in every town and village in India which would not devote itself merely to urging the

advisability of political Swaraj but which would bestir itself to bring about self-improvement, and attain the fullest implications of the civic sense.

One of the greatest strengths of Great Britain in the past has been the existence in the body politic of families whose tradition was state service. Sons for generations have entered the Army, the Navy, the Diplomatic or the Civil Services. They have avoided the temptations of trade and commerce, and they have brought to their respective services traditions of integrity and devotion which have not expected rewards financially commensurate with the work they have done. The United States of America has in recent years found it necessary to attempt to develop similar traditions, and to encourage entrance into the public services of a similar type of young man. In England the existence of this caste has resulted in the perpetuation of a standard in public service and efficiency which has been both an example and a check to transient politicians. India must copy this idea, and must encourage the growth of a similar spirit. Public life, like war, is much too important a thing to be left to the professional exponents. There are, if anything, in India too many politicians of a certain

standard and nature and too few real experts. There are too many job-seekers and far too widespread is the general conception of an administrative office as a peaceful rest cure and backwater from the main stream of active life. I would urge upon the patriots of India the tremendous importance of developing these two co-ordinated features of a healthy and vigorous democratic state—they must develop the civic sense of the people and they must secure a higher, more noble, and more self-sacrificing spirit in the members of the administrative services, especially in the realms of local government.

CHAPTER VI

THE GROWTH OF INDUSTRIALISM

IT is impossible to discuss the nature and the progress of industrialisation, and the problems attending this development, without at the onset coming into conflict with a very decided and emphatic school of thought in Indian politics. It is impossible to avoid treading on some of Mr. Gandhi's most cherished doctrines in a somewhat brutal manner, but if this is done, I would emphasise the fact that I am in the excellent company of some of the most prominent Indian political thinkers, and that the mere fact that I cannot agree with some of the Mahatma's economic dogmas by no means suggests that I do not hold Mr. Gandhi in the highest reverence as a personality, and a political and moral force worthy of the consideration of every man interested or concerned with the Indian problem. I am afraid, however, the undoubted fact has to be faced that the Industrial Revolution has arrived in India, and that it is impossible to put back the clock.

The arrival of foreign machine made goods, coupled with the decay of Indian industries, and the decay of many of old Indian towns, were the first signs of the results in India of the industrial policy pursued by the British Government as an outcome of the great changes that took place in England itself at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and it will perhaps not be out of place, in order to clarify the present-day problem, if the main features of the consequent reactions in India are here traced. As long as the commercial instincts of the East India Company made it encourage Indian industries in order to bolster up its export trade, the world-famous manufactures of India flourished, but with the growth and development of the Industrial Revolution in England this policy soon met with strong opposition from the vested interests in that country, and Parliament ordained that the Company should concentrate on the export from India of raw materials—a cheap source of supply for English manufactures. In the eighteenth century England used the weapon of tariffs against India to protect her woollen and silk manufactures, and as Mr. R. C. Dutt has pointed out, "It is unfortunately true that the East India Company and the British Parliament, following

a selfish commercial policy of a hundred years ago, discouraged Indian manufactures in the early years of British rule in order to encourage the rising manufactures of England. Their fixed policy during the last decades of the eighteenth century and the first decades of the nineteenth was to make India subservient to the industries of Great Britain and to make the Indian people grow raw produce only, in order to supply material for the looms and manufactories of Great Britain." Political supremacy was used to destroy a competitor and to exploit a market. This policy of prohibitive duties against Indian goods was only removed about the middle of the nineteenth century when the indigenous industries of India were already completely crippled. The workings of large scale production and the development of modern machinery were the strongest forces used to destroy Indian indigenous industries. Even the development of transport in India opening, as it did, remote parts of the country as a new market for imported goods intensified the force of this new competition. The immediate result in India was the wholesale abandonment by workers of their traditional occupations and a steady drift back to the land. No alternative forms of employment presented themselves or were sought out

by the authorities in the interests of the Indian workmen, with the result that resort to agriculture produced a state of affairs which was described, by a shrewd observer, as having sunk to the lowest and most desperate state towards the middle of the seventies of the last century. India came to be regarded as a large plantation to be exploited for the benefit of Great Britain. Raw produce was shipped by British agents, in British ships, to be worked in British owned factories by British labour, to be re-exported by British merchants to British firms in India. The country was transformed into a purely agricultural one, and if there was any real gain in industrial wealth, the last person who benefited from it was the Indian peasant. No new large scale industry arose, and the dispossessed artisan found himself forced to fall back upon the staple industry, agriculture. The best economic writers have deplored the increasing ruralisation of the country, the position of which would be more fully understood when the full import of Dr. Clouston's recent description of agriculture as a depressed industry is realised. Nothing has been done until the last few years to protect or encourage Indian industry, and even the much-lauded Agricultural Commission, by its careful avoidance of the main political

problem of tenancy, merely produced a theoretical and academic discussion. But even with these disadvantages the ordinary working of economic laws could not be entirely suspended. The standard of village life undoubtedly deteriorated during the last century, but there was a certain amount of compensation in the creation of manufacturing centres where industry, organised on a modern basis, enjoyed some degree of prosperity. British capital began to flow into India and the example given by its directors was soon followed by the commercially minded classes in India.

The introduction of the factory system took its first shape in the jute industry in Bengal and the cotton mill industry in Bombay. The first was almost entirely dominated by European capital—the latter from the first was mainly financed and managed by Indians. The influence of these two industries spread, and the era of the machine, with the general tendency to make a more popular use of mechanical appliances, can be definitely identified as in existence at the beginning of the century, and is now a universal feature of Indian life. It has, of course, been a cause of grievance to many Indian patriots that the industrialisation of India has been so slow and so unequal, and directed and

controlled for the most part by foreign capital. The latter feature has perhaps been unavoidable in view of the peculiar position of British supremacy in the country, but the reasons for the former are in great part to be based on features of Indian life which are only beginning to attract real attention. Indian capital is too often inadequate and can only be tempted by the certain promise of large and immediate returns. Banking is in an embryonic state, and is now the subject of a skilled inquiry. The basic industries of steel, iron and coal are not yet fully developed. Labour is too often unskilled and inefficient, and there has not arisen that most useful of all classes in the industrial development of a country, the Merchant Prince and the Captain of Industry. There have, of course, been honourable exceptions, but on the whole the generalisation is true, and when it is remembered that until the recent adoption of a protection policy, the Government of India's attitude towards this industrial problem was one of apathy, it is not surprising that Indian industry stands to-day in need of reform and modernisation.

At the same time there can be no doubt that the industrial development of India is a definite reality, and that the tendency is towards a definite increase. Already the usual features

of Industrial revolution have begun to manifest themselves, a manifestation which has carried with it features both pleasant and unpleasant. There are examples in India of the rapid conversion of villages into large towns, and of small towns into industrial cities. There are the usual concomitants of industrial progress in the occurrence of strikes and the emergence of unions of organised workers to ventilate grievances. There has been a wholesale flocking to the attractions of urban life by landlords and the handing over of the management of estates to agents whose main idea is the increase of revenue regardless of the conditions of the peasantry. The artificial encouragement of commercial life by means of freights, etc., has reacted unfavourably upon the marketing of agricultural produce, and has increased the grievances of the peasant, and on the whole it is not surprising that there has arisen a school of thought which, concentrating upon the worst features of industrialism, would revert to an idyllic picture of a happy, contented, and prosperous India before the introduction of the factory system. I am afraid that, however objectionable many features of India's present-day industrialisation may be, it is impossible to wipe out all that has been done, and to ignore

the working of forces which cannot be eliminated from present-day civilisation. The degree of acceleration of industrialisation is determined in the main by economic laws over which the politician and the statesman have little control. One can have sympathy for the point of view of those who oppose the extension of modern industrial methods because they have a genuine horror of machinery and the factory system, and because they believe that modern industry means a cheap and unsympathetic view of human life, degrades the individual, and tends to make existence mechanical and soulless. They believe quite honestly that there are advantages of far greater value than those attaching to the present system to be found in a return to India's former primitive and simple system of industry with a corresponding increase of the cottage industry, a more intelligent and humane use of the land, and the development of domestic handicrafts and the spinning wheel. The ideas of this school spring from a strong sentimentality rather than from a strong reason. It is impossible to draw a hard and fast line as to where industrialisation will stop. It is impossible to tell the farm labourer, for example, that it is permissible for him to use an improved plough but to reject a modern harvester. If

the principle is once admitted that it is right to conquer nature by the exercise of human ingenuity, it is surely a valid corollary that the conquest should be complete, and it must also be remembered that life in the old form was not always such a pleasant, easy and agreeable thing as its advocates would have us believe. I would not deride or oppose any means at all feasible by which it may be possible to increase the material comforts and improve the standard of living of the agricultural labourer who, at the present moment, forms by far the greater proportion of the people of India, and if Mr. Gandhi's spinning wheel can prove itself to be an economic weapon of improvement in this respect, I am willing to overlook its alleged spiritual advantages and to give it fair and full trial, but I find it hard to believe that this method alone is the correct way of approaching the present problem. If complete industrialisation has to come, as I believe it must, and if by complete industrialisation is meant the utilisation according to the best modern methods of the natural resources and products of India, then the correct attitude to be adopted is either one of complete opposition or complete acquiescence. In either case Indian industry in its growth, with the introduction of new and

better machinery and the increase of modern large scale production, is certain to bring with it the worst features of western capitalism, the slum, unemployment and the soulless exploitation of the worker by the capitalist. Already in the large manufacturing towns of India there is unmistakable and regrettable evidence of these features. One has only to have the roughest and most general knowledge about the conditions in the Bombay cotton trade to know that bad wages and bad housing conditions already exist. The general trend of economic and political thought in countries which have already experienced the worst features of industrialism is to support the theory that there must be a firm measure of state control and direction. More and more western legislation tends to interfere in industry, and to say in a most positive way to both the capitalist and the worker, "Thou shalt not." There is a universal condemnation of the slum, and of the factors which tend to make the workers herd together in squalid and insanitary surroundings. There is a firm and universal belief that the worker must be protected against illness and accident, and that one of the legitimate functions of the employer is to contribute to ensure against instability of employment. More and more the

tendency is to eliminate proved and demonstrated inequitable features of modern industry and to secure the establishment of machinery whereby a proper contribution is made by the employer in recognition of his duties and responsibilities. In a welter of confusing theories as to the future control and direction of western industry, no one has seriously yet suggested a return to a more primitive state. The sole contribution in this respect has come from India, and I cannot help recording my conviction that it is an empty and purposeless beating of the air.

Congressmen, who are and ought to be most vitally interested in this problem, must realise that their main object should be the increase of the wealth per head of the millions of their fellow-countrymen. They must realise that this can only be done by the modernisation of methods of production, the careful pruning of the present system, and the even more careful tending and direction of industrial progress. India under Dominion Status must be ready to take her place in a Commonwealth of Nations, industrially organised to a high degree of efficiency and engaged daily in improvement. There is no need for agriculture to suffer, or for a great engulfment of the rural population to follow as

a consequence upon the growth of industrialisation. Organisation, study and knowledge, not only of India's problems but of the world situation, are essential requisites for tackling this future phase in India's development. It will be a pity if energy is wasted on a vain and futile campaign when so much remains to be done of a more practical and profitable nature. Let the results in America and Western Europe be carefully sifted and ascertained, and let Congressmen pledge themselves to apply the lessons of a longer experience and to combine this policy with their sturdy patriotism to ensure that the future of industrialisation in India will be a source of strength to their country and not a deplorable weakness and opportunity for criticism.

CHAPTER VII

POVERTY AND UNEMPLOYMENT

THE most facile generalisation about India that presents itself, both to the foreign observer and to the indigenous patriot, is the widespread poverty of the country and its low standard of life. It is a generalisation which must be placed side by side with the well-known fact that India is one of the most naturally rich and productive countries in the world. It is almost impossible to calculate the agricultural products lying as undeveloped potentialities in the rich silt and alluvial deposits in the valleys of her great rivers. Much other evidence could be adduced, but instead of there being general satisfaction with the standard of life, the economist and the politician and the administrator are faced with a wholesale negation of comfort and a wholesale epidemic of discontent. It is usual, if not fashionable, to blame the British Government for this deplorable condition, and it is an easy way to avoid hard work at and study of the problem merely to assert that the results of an alien rule are to be seen

in the empty stomachs of so many of the people. I cannot accept this easy way out of the difficulty, although I am not inclined lightly to exonerate British administration for much of the present discontent and low standard of life. Apart from the general laissez-faire policy which has been adopted until quite recent times by the British Government, it must be remembered that it was but natural for the British administrator to avoid the making of definite recommendations upon questions which were intimately bound up with the habits and customs of the people. The poverty of so many Indians to-day, and the large measure of disconcerting unemployment are results not only of the lack of imagination on the part of their rulers, but of the inherent habits and modes of thinking of many of the inhabitants of the country. There can be no doubt that there has been for many years a constant drain of wealth from the country which may be either considered as the results of exploitation, or as the natural consequences of the impinging of a country more industrially developed and experienced in the ways of commerce upon a country which is largely rooted in traditional methods of agriculture. It has been a comment charged, for example, that the spectacular and disastrous

famines which have so unhappily characterised the economic history of India have been the result of foreign rule, and the British Government has come to be regarded as the sole cause of famine, despite the existence of historic evidence establishing the fact that there were even more disastrous famines long before the British came to India. The authenticated details about the famines of 1291, 1555, and 1630 demolish this charge, although there may be something in the more reasonable accusation that the industrial, financial, and land revenue policy of the British Government, by increasing the impoverishment of the people has made them less capable of resisting the results of unfavourable rains. It has been argued, with considerable force, that the stabilisation of the rupee at eighteen pence has meant a direct and burdensome charge upon the agriculturist, with the result that he is to-day some twelve and a half per cent. worse off than he was, say, at the beginning of the century and consequently twelve and a half per cent. less capable of combating emergencies.

It is impossible within the scope of a short essay of this nature fully to examine economic situation that generally prevails in the country and to allocate and apportion blame or praise.

There can be no doubt that certain features of the industrial development of India that have attended the British regime have rendered the evils of famines less acute. The opening up of the country by roads and railways has meant that, though the rains may fail in one part of India, full advantage can be gained from the fact that there is generally somewhere else a good monsoon, and that on the whole in bulk the usual quantity of food produced annually is available. Again the workings of industrialisation have meant that in most cases famines have ceased to be food famines and in becoming money famines have lent themselves as particularly susceptible to Government relief and to measures of providing employment. Some of the best work that stands to the credit of British administrators in India has been done in coping with the exigencies of nature, and though it is an easy and cheap charge to say that the inspiring motive has been a desire to prevent a falling off of land revenue and a decrease in the taxation yield, it is impossible in all fairness to avoid attributing to the Government more humane reasons for their interference. It is true, and ample evidence can be accumulated on the point, that the

excessive reliance of the people of India on agriculture, the decay of old industries and the slow emergence of new ones, the widespread prevalence of economic social customs resulting in almost universal debt, and the traditional fatalism of the Indian peasants, are factors making for India's poverty which might have been resolved and mitigated by more intelligent Government interference, and as far as this charge can be proved, there is certainly some room for criticism. It is, however, possible to make the just retort that a reorganisation of India's economic life—a reorganisation which would involve an intensive programme of economic regeneration and an inevitable grave interference with the traditional life of the people, is a task not only beyond the capabilities of an alien administration, but also one which should not be properly undertaken until there is in existence a body of popular opinion demanding aid, assistance, and guidance to secure such ends. In other words, the general problem of poverty presents the Indian patriot with a difficult vicious circle, and I have not the slightest doubt but that real and material improvement will only take place when Indian politicians and statesmen themselves are forced by the vocal demand of the masses to tackle

the problems for themselves. It is one of the disadvantages attending the establishment of any foreign government that its acts are always suspect, and that it is impossible for it to be given the credit of approaching the solution of any grave economic question in a spirit of altruistic disinterestedness. But it must also be remembered that indigenous governments can also render themselves liable to the same charge, and that it requires the most careful adjustment of various schools of economic thought effectively to produce measures that will tend to improve the economic condition of a country.

Parallel with the problems that follow from the poverty of millions of Indians, and overlapping them to some degree, are the problems arising out of the various forms of unemployment existing in the country. Unemployment has become in some Western countries, especially in Great Britain, the dominant political issue of the day. Practically ever since the results of the Industrial Revolution became stabilised there has been a permanent margin of the unemployed whose numbers have shown no tendency to respond to such palliatives as unemployment insurance and other forms of national and local relief. The post-war depression in industry which followed the artificial

boom of 1920 and 1921 has had the result of flinging upon the market over a million unemployed male and female workers, and of threatening with a similar fate at least another couple of million who barely manage to exist on the precariousness of short time. The problem in India is fundamentally different from the problem in Western countries. With the vast majority of the people depending upon agriculture, the effects of competitive industrialism are neither so manifest nor so acute. There is, of course, seasonal unemployment in agriculture and exceptional unemployment in agriculture, and the main problem in this respect is to discover subsidiary and profitable industries to prevent the irregularities of and overcrowding on the land. From a more strictly political point of view, the most serious form of unemployment that exists in India is that among the various degrees of educated middle-class workers. There is, it is true, a certain amount of industrial unemployment, the result mainly of antique methods of business organisation, the short-sightedness of employers, the pressure of outside competition and the periodical failure of the home market owing to its depression from more fundamental economic reasons, and the steady decrease in

the purchasing capabilities of the agriculturists. On the whole, however, the demand to-day seems to be for more industrial labour, especially of a skilled kind, and it must be recognised that the hardships of industrial unemployment are to some degree mitigated by the readiness and ease with which such employees transfer themselves to the land. There is also considerable depression and unemployment among the workers in cottage industries—an unemployment which results not so much in acute distress as in a general lowering of economic vitality. The more serious and politically disturbing form of unemployment—that among the middle classes—has been agitating the minds of Indian patriots for some years. Various committees in the different provinces have examined the problem with not altogether satisfactory results. As one of the main difficulties arises from securing a satisfactory definition of the term “The educated middle class,” on the whole it is perhaps safe to include all those who have completed the full vernacular or Anglo-vernacular course of education. The dominating facts of the situation are that, year by year, the educational establishments of the country turn out an increasingly large number of young men, who seek employment in

avenues which are not offering a corresponding increase of opportunity. The Madras Committee were of the opinion that such a demand and supply was in the unhappy proportion of two to one, and a test advertisement for a clerical job carrying a salary of 35 rupees a month produced in that Presidency over 650 applications. The result of this widespread economic discontent among the educated or partially educated classes has a grave political reaction. The comment of the Sadler Commission is worth quoting in full. "The existence and the steady increase of a sort of intellectual proletariat not without reasonable grievances," they wrote, "forms a menace to good government, especially in a country where the small educated class is alone vocal. It must be an equal menace whatever form the government may assume. So long as the great mass of the nation's intelligent manhood is driven, in ever increasing numbers, along the same often unfruitful course of study, which creates expectations that cannot be fulfilled, and actually unfits those who pursue it from undertaking many useful occupations necessary for the welfare of the country, any government, however it may be constituted, whether it be bureaucratic or popular, must find its work

hampered by an unceasing stream of criticism and a natural demand for relief which cannot be met."

The present-day results of this ably analysed discontent have far transcended the fears of the learned authors of the comment I have quoted. The large numbers of unemployed and educated and middle class young men have turned, with an unfortunate degree of enthusiasm, towards the doctrines of revolutionary socialism and often active communism. They believe that everything must be wrong with a system in which they can find no satisfactory place, and they believe that the more violent forms of political agitation and a complete destruction and abolition of society as it is at present organised, are the only remedies for their grievances. They have no trust either in the British Government or in the possible alternative of a constitutional form of Dominion Status directed by their own countrymen. I am told by many experts and hitherto generally respected Indian leaders, that it is becoming daily increasingly difficult, if not impossible, to secure a hearing from these young men. I learn that, owing to their education and the sincerity and validity of their grievances, they are more and more dominating the masses who suffer similar economic

disabilities. I have the greatest sympathy with them, and I am most honest in my belief that their problem is one of the most important and urgent in India to-day, but I cannot subscribe to their doctrines, for, besides being constitutionally incapable of thinking communistically, I do not see in their proposals any proper or adequate remedies. It does not seem to me to be the act of wise statesmanship completely to destroy while there are still in existence unchartered methods of amendment. It cannot, for example, be argued with any degree of conviction that there is no further room for the overhaul and reform of the present educational system, and that there has been no real attempt made to correlate the genuine needs of the country with the various kinds of education offered in the various kinds of institutions. Consider the present-day results of education on the whole. It has been ascertained that unemployment is found to be most widespread among young men whose education has been purely literary. In the lower grades it is most difficult to find work for those who have not passed Matriculation, which is the minimum qualification for Government employment. The general course of a young man's life who does succeed in securing his degree is, first, an attempt to enter

Government service, then an attempt to secure work under some semi-official or official body, and finally a drifting into the legal profession or adopting some form of embryonic journalism. Even more specially qualified men like Doctors find that there is overcrowding in the larger towns, and that the poverty of the people in villages prevents them earning a living wage. Engineers and chemists, on the other hand, find less difficulty in securing work, though it is unfortunate that the large number of people who would like to be employed on the railways have not taken the precaution of securing sufficient training. In business and commerce there is a plethora of unskilled labour fitted for the lower forms of clerical positions, but not possessed of any skilled training.

I cannot help thinking that there is something gravely wrong with the present system of education; that it is not nowadays properly adjusted to the needs of the present state of industrial development, or the immediate requirements. The educational system seems dominated by examinations, the gate to Government employment. Students are taught to repeat parrot-like the more salient portions of text-books, and there is little attempt made to cultivate a method of thinking. The old

days, when Indian education was dominated by Englishmen of personality who were living, inspiring forces, and powerful mental and spiritual directors of their pupils, seem to have disappeared, and their place has been taken by uninspired preparers for examinations. Side by side with this decay in the standard of education and tutoring, is the undoubted fact that much of the present-day educational methods tend to produce a fresh caste of literacy which holds in contempt any form of manual work. Rarely does a student return to the land to apply a trained brain to agricultural problems. He much prefers to haunt Government officers, and to drift into League of Youth movements. It must not be forgotten also that some typical and characteristic features of Indian social life, such as the caste system, the practice of early marriage and the joint family cannot be regarded as the perfect background for the life of the student whose main object ought to be an attempt to render himself fit for the main objects of life. But on the whole it must be realised that the main reason for this lack of employment among the educated middle class is the comparatively poor and incomplete industrial development of the country, and the consequent small

number of profitable occupations. Though much conscious effort can be undertaken to hasten, guide, and direct such development, and though there is certain to be a mutual reaction if education is made more comprehensively vocational, the hard and unpleasant lesson must be learnt that there is no complete, final, and absolute cure for unemployment. Much can be done by more organised effort, and by a stricter examination system and a higher standard which will weed out the weaker and divert them from their proposed continuance in an unprofitable channel. Perhaps the most comprehensive remedy that can be suggested is an increase in general prosperity which—and I must emphasise this point with all Congressmen—will not be secured if the inauguration of Dominion Status is accompanied by a marked degree of inefficiency in public life. No one attaches more validity than I do to the proposition that good government is no substitute for self-government, but self-government can easily degenerate into selfish or soulless government. Liberty is a praiseworthy ideal for any people, but liberty exercised in an atmosphere falling below a certain degree of efficiency becomes mere licence. The task before the Indian patriot on this question is a most difficult one. No mere

reform of the educational system can or will suffice. The throwing open of larger numbers of government posts may inaugurate a process not far akin from retrogression in public prosperity. The whole attitude of the Indian people must be changed, and they must be taught to think modernly, efficiently, and practically, when they face the difficulty of having to produce increased prosperity with their own material. Many dead and rotten branches in the social system of India will have to disappear ; there will have to be a ruthless pruning of disadvantages and disabilities, and there will have to be a more widespread, if not universal uprising of an informed, intelligent, moral consciousness dedicated to supreme, selfless national ends.

CHAPTER VIII

THIS FREEDOM

DURING the last two or three weeks, I have heard speeches from young Indians explaining their attitude towards the Viceroy's Declaration, and towards the next step in the evolution of Indian self-government which may be safely taken as expressing roughly the views of the advocates of independence as opposed to Dominion Status. There can be no doubt as to the sincerity of the feelings dominating and actuating these expressions of views. The speakers were all young men who, if they had not attained to any high degree of clarification in their arguments, could at least plead a keen sense of patriotism and a burning desire to see a better India. I have little use for youth unless it does indulge in progressive thought, and I do not blame young India for adhering to a school of thought which is calculated to gather round it the more socialistically inclined and republican-minded elements of the country. What I am going to blame Indian youth for is a lack of a sense of reality and a sense of

responsibility. The trouble with so many young men to-day is that they are suffering from a rush of catchwords to the brain, and that they wilfully and in my opinion stupidly confuse the simplest issues that are placed before them. It is quite true, and it is legitimate that their main driving force is a desire for India's freedom, but it is not legitimate for them as things are at present to advance solutions which are both impracticable and impossible. I have already pointed out how, in my opinion, it is a source of weakness and not of strength to the cause of Indian patriotism, to introduce lines of demarcation based on economic theories before there is in existence in the country a stable democratic form of government. To do so is to turn constitutional progress from the ordinary efforts of evolution into chaos. As far as I can gather, and I hope I am not doing any one an injustice, this result is not only not feared but is even welcomed. The exponents of these ideas frankly admit that they have no use for the constitutional methods which are advocated by older, wiser, and more responsible men, and they are completely indifferent to the argument that it is only by such methods that India can progress and advance to full responsible self-

government. Their doctrine is in one way a creed of despair. When pressed logically they will admit that the ultimate sanction for carrying out their programme is force, but at the same time they grant that any and all attempts, as things are, to apply this sanction are useless. They believe that by carrying on as they are they will ultimately be able to produce such a widespread diffusion of independence mentality that they will be able eventually to win their objective. They are frankly propagandist, and they make no secret of the fact that they do not want any alliance with or association with any of the moderate bodies existing in the country, nor do they wish to come to any terms with the Indian States. In a word, they say, "We are right, and everyone else is wrong, and because we are right we must eventually triumph, and in the meantime we are prepared to pay the price."

In face of the immediate problem that is presented to the Indian nation, I would most heartily condemn these ideas and these doctrines. I am afraid I must entertain a much higher idea as to the capacities and abilities of Indian political leaders. On the whole they strike me as an extraordinarily able body of men, possessed of striking natural gifts and

skilled in the arts of leadership. It is true that they may often in the past have proved disappointing to the wilder and more irresponsible elements in the country. They have accepted compromises and they have worked with one eye on immediate realities and the other on their distant goal. They have managed, with the exception of possibly one or two periods, to exercise a notable measure of prudent statesmanship, and they have been able at the same time to evolve and produce a national consciousness which is on the whole worthy of admiration and respect. If these be their faults, and I am afraid that I can find no other grounds for their indictment, I must part company with my young friends. It is quite possible to entertain the most genuine sympathy with the impatience of youth and even with the feelings of despair that are too often engendered by the workings of the present system, but while these factors can be taken into careful consideration, and while their intensity must always affect the tempo of politics and the governing ideas of political strategy and tactics, there are other considerations, to ignore which would be suicidal and fatal. A country cannot lightly abandon tried and trusted leaders at the demand of a minority which has, as yet, shown little signs

of possessing responsibility. Ingratitude is not an unexpected desert of public men and politicians, but there should be some limit even to the bounds of ingratitude, and the self-sacrificing devotion which has been amply manifested by the present-day Indian leaders should not be ignored and forgotten. In any country situated as India is there is always bound to be a discontented and revolutionary minority. There are always those who would hasten quickly, and who wish to see great constitutional changes performed in the twinkling of an eye. Their existence is often a good corrective and necessary urge to the more cautious, but they should never be allowed to dominate or take control. These considerations should be remembered and carefully weighed, not only by India's present-day leaders, not only by the inspirers of the extremer elements, but also by the Government if it is genuine in wishing to proclaim its change of heart. It is certain that between now and the date of the Round Table Conference, every action, every policy of Government will be most carefully and even hostilely criticised by the left wing. Anything which is on the border line of seeming injustice, or appears lightly to be productive of grievance, or even distantly resembles so called rigorous

government, will be seized upon as an excuse for embarrassing the old leaders and justifying the policy of the new. If Government is thoroughly and whole-heartedly honest in its desire to give the Indian leaders a chance to co-operate with and encourage and strengthen the moderate elements in the country, it must recognise the difficulties that face the reputable leaders of opinion to-day and do its utmost to help them in their difficult task.

Much of the force that is behind the left wing movement to-day is derived from ideas about freedom which are unfortunately far too often incoherent and chaotic. There seems to be some sort of an idea that Dominion Status must be rejected as a feasible proposition, because it will be impossible under Dominion Status for India to realise her full self-respect and to secure her rightful position among the nations of the world. The theory seems to be that Dominion Status is merely another form of perpetuating the worst kinds of British Imperialism, and for retaining India in a humiliating bondage. Frankly this theory seems to me to be based not only upon an unjustifiable amount of suspicion, but upon a deplorable ignorance as to the dynamic nature of the idea of Dominion Status. I cannot see any

practical difference between the freedom that can be enjoyed as a full member of the British Commonwealth of Nations and the vague and mystical freedom which is supposed to attend the establishment of an independent "Nation." It is impossible, to come down to reality, for even the most fervid Indian patriot to ignore and resist the forces of history. For good or for ill, India and England have become inextricably linked together, and I cannot see the force in any argument which would prefer the establishment of independence when there is ready at hand a machinery and an opportunity for enjoying similar privileges and a similar status to those enjoyed by Canada or Australia. Bearing in mind the objections I have heard against Dominion Status, and the arguments that have been used for independence, I re-examined the report on inter-Imperial relations produced by Lord Balfour's Committee of the Imperial Conference in 1926. The object of that report has been stated by Mr. Bruce, the Australian Premier, when he said "We had to establish clearly the fact of the full autonomy of the Dominions in respect to every particular issue that was raised, and we had to do this on a basis which left the essential unity of the British Commonwealth unimpaired in any

way . . . In every single case the reconciliation between freedom and unity has been achieved in such a way that there is no further room for doubt among men of goodwill about what the British Empire means and how in practice it may be expected to conduct its affairs.....We know now where we stand as an Empire. Each part can rely upon a genuine belief of all in the Imperial bond, and each knows that his close union implies no derogation from its own sovereign status." General Hertzog went further. Speaking at Pretoria on the report he said, "South Africa, so it is declared here, is free in its self-government inside as well as outside, and the degree and nature of the self-government is equal to that of England without any inferiority or reservation.....Commonwealth of Nations is the name for Great Britain and the Dominions in their free association under the Crown..... The British Empire is not a status persona and possesses no authority or domination over the members or any member of the British Commonwealth of Nations. The Empire group unit idea had been broken." It is important to point out that the acceptance by the Imperial conference of the report constitutes a Convention or compact which has to be regarded as binding in a constitutional sense, and it must

also be noted that the interpretation placed upon it by the Dominions of the Dominion Premiers has never been challenged.

The Report states that the Dominions are autonomous communities equal in status, in no way subordinate one to another in any respect of their domestic or external affairs, though united by a common allegiance to the Crown and freely associated as members of the British Commonwealth of Nations. No self-governing entity is superior to or subordinate to another. It is plain that there was a distinct intention to state in the most authoritative fashion a denial of the old notion of subjection to the Supreme legislative power of the Imperial parliament. That power has now definitely disappeared, and each self-governing unit has complete freedom of action in both domestic and external affairs. No one can interfere with its internal government, and, as a learned authority points out, "Its external freedom is a consequence of its membership of the League of Nations, the result of which is recognition in an international sense with the consequent power to have foreign representation, and to enter into treaties—it being understood that membership of the British Commonwealth continues." It is more difficult to state whether a self-governing

Dominion is a completely international state. The probability is that "in an international sense," it cannot be regarded apart from its membership of the British Commonwealth, saving its rights as a member of the League of Nations.

How far this idea of autonomy and equality has been accepted can be excellently shown by the position which the report assigned to the Governor General. In the earlier stages of Dominion development the Governor General was appointed solely on the advice of His Majesty's Ministers in London, and acted also as their representative. In the light of the new status now recognised as pertaining to a self-governing Dominion, the Governor General has become the representative of the Crown, holding in all essential respects the same position in relation to the administration of public affairs in the Dominions as is held by the King in Great Britain. He is no longer the representative or agent of the Government of the day in London, nor does he own allegiance to any department of that Government. It has followed from this that a Governor General of a Dominion is no longer the formal official channel of communication between His Majesty's Government of Great Britain and the Dominion.

The right and proper and only channel now is between government and government direct. It is, of course, essential that a Governor General for the proper exercise of his duties should be supplied with copies of all documents of importance and should be kept as fully informed about Cabinet, Parliamentary and public affairs as is His Majesty the King. Though he is bereft of many of his old arbitrary powers, and no longer acts for or under the instructions of the British Government, the position of a Governor General in a Dominion is one of great importance, and he can, if he is possessed of the tact and ability of an Earl of Athlone, exercise a most beneficial influence on public affairs. It would appear that, even on the question of the reservation of Bills, the Governor General has ceased to be the proper channel of communication. The Dominion Constitutions provide for the reservations of certain Bills for His Majesty's pleasure, and it would appear that all the Governor General is now entitled to do is to communicate such Bills to the Crown while the Crown can, if it so desires, refer them to the Home Government for advice.

These new and more important features of Dominion Constitutional practice ought, I think, to convince the most obdurate that as full and

as satisfactory a measure of independence can be enjoyed under Dominion Status as is desired by any nation. There is also another and most important factor which urges me to press forward the idea of Dominion Status in the present circumstances. I mean, of course, a factor apart from the sentimental bond of loyalty. The benefits of participating in an association of free and independent nations following the same constitutional practice, inspired with the same dynamic political ideas and all straining consciously or unconsciously towards a uniform standard of efficiency and moral and social tone cannot help being a formative influence of inestimable benefit in the future of India. As I have pointed out before in these essays, freedom is a conception which involves restraints and these unreasoning cries for independence ignore the essential conditions which must attach themselves to the process of establishing such a status. Independence, of whatever form, cannot compete for one moment as a practical and potential reality with Dominion Status. Why then should so many Indians go straining after the moon, when there is something real within their grasp? When so many experienced, rational, and devoted Indian patriots are content to accept and

to work honourably for the grant of Dominion Status, surely it is misguided energy, if not foolish tactics, to advocate and propagand for a solution which to the majority of people must appear impossible! Incidentally also why should any section of Indian politicians seek to do anything to alienate their friends and make it impossible for their sympathisers to work with them?

CHAPTER IX

THE FUTURE

DURING the next few months India will be deluged with constitution mongering. The discussions on the full report of the Nair Committee and the discussions on the Simon Commission's recommendations will, despite the doubtful validity which is now attached to both these documents, attract considerable attention and criticism. There will be those who will argue that the immediate problem in India is a careful and meticulous overhaul of the Government of India Act of 1919, with a view to amending the generally admitted failure of dyarchy, and to see how far it will be safe to extend the principle of democratic control in the Central and Provincial Governments. There will be much talk about and reference to co-efficients of efficiency. There will be discussions about the various kinds of constitutional machinery that ought to be evolved to deal with particular problems, and there will, of course, be much parading of the difficulties attaching to the question of minorities in order to demonstrate the impossibility of

granting India democratic government. It is almost safe to presume that the duty which officialdom will take upon itself will be an assumption of sympathy, of a desire to do good by India, but at the same time will manifest a reluctance and persistent attempt to mitigate any real advance by a continual harping upon objections. It is not to be expected that the Services will willingly abandon the position they have so long enjoyed. It is not to be expected that the representatives of vested interests will agreeably acquiesce in being placed in the position of equality. There is bound to be a stern and vigorous fight, and, human nature being what it is, there will be many who will hold up their hands in horror at the mere mention of any appreciable advance, and will do all in their power to retard and indefinitely postpone any real steps in this direction. It has been made amply obvious in the wild outburst from that bunch of ex-governors who occasionally emerge from their inglorious retirement in England to croak warnings in the public press at the mere thought of self-government for India so abhorrent to a powerful group which unfortunately has the ear of a section of the British public. The lamentations of a Craddock or an O'Dwyer will unfortunately count for more than the reasonable attitude of the

Europeans in India who have advised their fellow-countrymen to ignore these disgruntled pensioners on the sane ground that they are out of touch with public opinion in India. So the Indian patriot and the friends of India can look forward to a fierce and bitter struggle, and it behoves them in order to secure the greatest possible advance, in order to make good their claims to self-government, carefully to consider their tactics and to plan their strategy and to see that no stone is left unturned to further the national cause.

I have already in the earlier essays in this little book emphasised in a full spirit of friendliness certain points which must be taken into consideration, and certain policies which, in my opinion, should be adopted, and I would, in this concluding chapter, lay down what I think ought to be some governing principles* to be adopted immediately, and faithfully carried out during the next year. First and foremost I would emphasise the need for constant propaganda. Unfortunately, during the Great War, the word propaganda acquired a sinister meaning because of the unscrupulous methods often adopted. One has only to remember the ridiculous and lying story of the "Daily Mail" about the German corpse factory for the production of essential fats

from human bodies to realise how unsavoury propaganda became in the minds of many decent thinking men, but there is propaganda and propaganda, and the campaign I would urge is the education of public opinion, and especially in England, on the Indian question. Public opinion in England is largely formed by indirect methods based on a knowledge of mass psychology. The great English newspapers with their enormous circulation, their provincial branches, and their provincial subsidiaries and imitators, while rarely embarking on a programme designed to inculcate a particular political creed, are consciously framed with a desire to preserve the status quo and to cater for the average taste of the public. A skilful use of the sex interest and a clever harping upon the desire of the public for the sensational or the unusual, means that English newspapers, with some rare exceptions take a most limited view of their obligations to a sub-continent in which one fifth of the human race has its habitation. Week by week during the last two years I have carefully studied the English newspapers from the Indian point of view. The main news that is cabled by the responsible agencies and by the various correspondents is sensational and

incomplete. What is worse, it tends to give an entirely erroneous view of the situation in India. Even the more serious papers concentrate, on the whole, upon ugly aspects of Indian public life and for one small paragraph about moderate opinion, there will be found columns about agitation and sedition. Even when a more serious topic is in the news, the attitude of more responsible organs is open to criticism. During the peregrinations of the Simon Commission, for example, no more distorted or untrue account of that body's activities appeared anywhere than in the "Daily Telegraph," and it is a little more than a year ago that the President of the Assembly had to reprimand a correspondent for sending an unfair criticism of his actions. For the most part the popular press only gives space to stories about bombs, murders, strikes, or eccentric rulers of Indian States. Week by week, when India is seething with interest over some all-important event or policy, all that the large circulation newspapers do is to concentrate on some sensational crime. In the week that the question of hunger-striking reached its height, even a responsible paper like the "Manchester Guardian" figured, as its most prominent item of Indian news, a story of a mad butler who was alleged to have attacked

a lonely English girl somewhere in Burma. I do not entirely blame the correspondents of these newspapers in India, or even the agencies, although Reuters, who are a semi-subsidised body, should make a more strenuous attempt to send a truer picture of Indian life and aspirations. It is not entirely the fault either, of the people responsible for bringing out the English newspapers. They have to cook the daily dish to please the palate of their readers. I am afraid the people who must be blamed in large part are the Indians themselves, who have neglected and ignored the importance of the necessity of educating public opinion in England, and insisting on a more serious view being taken of their country. It is noticeable, in this connection, that practically every Indian visitor to England during the last year has returned preaching the necessity for propaganda, and has explained how, in his own personal knowledge, much can be done by the answering of simple questions and the correcting of elementary mistakes, to bring about a more favourable atmosphere. Up till now in England the field has been held almost entirely by people hostile to this country. I do not myself believe that the English people are opposed to India's aspirations ; the correct diagnosis is that they

are indifferent because they are ignorant. India has never loomed large as a political question since the days of the Sepoy Rebellion, and even when Mr. Montague was battling for the Reforms there was little general interest. This ignorance is not confined to the masses. The average amount of interest and knowledge in the average Member of Parliament is deplorably small, yet Indians have reported that there is a universal sympathy and quickening of interest when the other side of the picture is put before Britain's legislators. I consider it most essential that, as soon as possible, an intensive propaganda on behalf of India should be started in London. Half a dozen of the best Indian publicists should visit London and organise a bureau in which all the modern methods of publicity should be practised with expert and technical knowledge. This is, of course, going to cost money, and will mean a considerable degree of self-sacrifice, but surely it is not too great a price to pay for the results which are bound to follow. I would not have such a bureau conducted in the interests of only one party in India. I would have it speak with a united voice representing the greatest common measure of agreement, and thus fitted authoritatively to answer criticisms and to give information.

If it is decided to go to the Round Table Conference, and if no foolishness, either on the part of the Government in India, or of some sections of Indian public opinion, prevents the appearance of a powerful and united delegation it is most essential that the time between now and the date of the Conference should be devoted to the most intense and careful preparation. If any model is needed for this advice I would point to the manner in which the British delegation prepared itself for participation in the Peace Conference deliberations. It is significant that, at Versailles, the Delegation which presented a complete and worked out scheme for the League of Nations was, not the American, but the British. The proposition however should stand on its own merits. As far as I can understand it, it appears to me that the main work of the Round Table Conference will not be the mere stating of a set of political principles, but will be the substantiating of a case and the working out of an agreed Bill for presentation to Imperial Parliament. That means to say that the practicability of the application of the principles advanced by the Indian Delegation will be inquired into with meticulous care by the British Government experts. The main work

of the Delegation will be done in sub-committees, where, even if there is among the Indian Members a general agreement as to the nature of the irreducible minimum which must be obtained, the major difficulty will be justification in the realms of practical administration. It is obvious that the British Government will have at its command all the resources of its various departments and the brains of first-class experts. I myself believe, and I know that my belief is shared by many Indians, that no British Government will lightly reject any point of view that is thoroughly established by facts and satisfactorily proven. Such a work cannot be undertaken with any hope of success unless there is the most careful and thorough preparation. In the talks and discussions which I have had with Indian leaders during the last few weeks, I have been pleased to find a welcome acceptance of this necessity. They recognise that they must go, fully armed with all the available knowledge possible, to meet the British Government upon its own grounds. On the other hand it is distressing to find among the rank and file an indifference to this work of preparation, and a belief that all that is necessary is a sincere advocacy of the principles of Dominion Status and an airy talk about the

rights of the Indian people. There is a lack of thoroughness in thinking on this matter which may easily prove disastrous to India's cause. I would suggest that, immediately after the Lahore Congress, a working committee be appointed, including the representatives of all the parties in India who are agreed as to the nature of the general demand, and that this committee should proceed immediately with the task of raising sufficient funds to establish a secretariat which would apportion the technical studies of the members of the Delegation and would collect all the requisite detailed information. This committee also should be charged with the task of hammering out an agreed arrangement with the Indian Princes, and with effecting a sincere and lasting peace between the Hindu majority and the Muslim minority. India's delegates would then be in the position of being able to enter the Round Table Conference with an impressive degree of unity and an imposing amount of knowledge. I consider this preparation as important as propaganda, and I would urge Congressmen, if they do, as I most sincerely hope, decide to support the Viceroy's Declaration, to enter on this work immediately.

Besides propaganda and preparation, there is one more all-embracing ingredient for success

which must be emphasised. I would plead most energetically for a more rational, moderate, and accommodating frame of mind among many of my Indian friends. No one is going to deny that there have been grievous mistakes in the past, or that there is no possibility of grievous mistakes being again committed on both sides between now and the date of the Conference. Governments are made up of human beings and there is nothing perfect about the constitutions of Oppositions however noble and patriotic the sources of their inspiration may be. It is impossible to expect what Mr. Gandhi calls a change of heart in a few weeks, or even a few months, to be manifested in every branch of the Government of India. It must be remembered that among some of the most strenuous opposers of Indian aims are Indians themselves, and many of the unpleasant features of the present regime are directly traceable to the influence of Indians who have become bound up with the present system of Government. It is therefore most essential that the elements of racial antagonism, which confuse and embitter so many features of the present situation, should be forgotten in a genuine and whole-hearted desire by both parties to make the best of the present orientation of policy. If it is

essential, and I believe it is essential, for Government to change its heart, it is equally essential for certain sections in Indian public life to change as well. It is not practical politics to expect all the gestures, all the approaches, and all the signs of conciliation to come from one side, and I believe that much can be done to encourage and help the friends of India, in India and in England, by a more widespread adoption of restraint by the left wing of Indian political thought. I have written strongly above of the foolishness which attends an unnecessary confusing of the present issue, and I would emphasise this again in the present connection. It seems to me criminal when there is, as I am convinced there is, a real, genuine desire on the part of a British political party to settle this most momentous problem, for Indians thoughtlessly to alienate or willingly to embarrass their friends. It must also be remembered that any action or speech or policy which has these deplorable tendencies also has the effect of strengthening the hands of the Birkenheads, the Readings, and the O'Dwyers. With all due respect to my Indian friends, something more than a burning and zealous patriotism is needed in the present circumstances. There must be coupled with such a sentiment knowledge,

caution, prudence, and respect. Every step must be carefully thought out ; every effect must be wisely studied. The end—the ultimate aim is a great and noble one. The inspiration is equally dignified and praiseworthy. Surely it is not asking too much to require of the Indian patriot a measure of what I would describe, without any desire to be offensive, as political commonsense.

THE END.

